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Date 14/12/76

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# RESEARCH

FILE No. RR 6/5 (Part 100)

TITLE: RESEARCH MIDDLE EAST:  
IRAQ: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1973

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Mr. Kundle

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Mr. Williams 5/2  
 Mr. Clayton 6/2  
 Mr. Wright

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Mr. Burton - 1

1 reg: Annual Review for 1973.

Following discussions with me Mr Rundle has now produced a final draft version of the Annual Review for 1973, which I attach. The paper will eventually issue as a Research Dept despatch and I should be grateful for any comments before agreeing that the paper may be printed.

ESJ 4/2

1. Mr Rundle has again produced an excellent draft. I have only a few minor comments.

2. Is it correct (para 1) to say that Iraq's popularity with her neighbours was "dissipated" by her opposition to the cease-fire and subsequent peace moves? Given Syrian attitudes to disengagement (and the recent reports of Iraqi troops returning to Syria), have her relations with Syria (as opposed to Egypt) really suffered from this?

3. Can we give a month for the deadline referred to in the last sentence of para 5?

4. "Pre-Israeli" in para 7 strikes me as somewhat bald, unless it is a direct quotation. Is it?

5. We should ensure please that the Despatch is dated before the latest approaches on 8 February. Otherwise the remarks on UK/Iraq Diplomatic relations will read oddly.

P. R. H. Wright.

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RR 6/5

Phw 8/2

Ado.



Mr Bannerman - RD

We agree and agreed the amendment  
required by paras 2, 3 & 4 of Mr Wright  
minute. I should be grateful if you  
would now arrange for the despatch to  
be issued bearing in mind Mr Wright's  
comments in his para 5.

EBW 11/2



Covering CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Orchard

IRAQ : ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1973

1. I attach the final version of the Iraq Annual Review for 1973. The Review was prepared by Mr Rundle and has been cleared with Middle East Department. It is now ready for issue in the Diplomatic Report Series.

2. I also attach last year's file on the 1972 Annual Review which shows the procedure and acts as precedent.

3. The only point I wish to stress is that the Review should be dated before 8 February as requested by Mr Wright. I suggest that the date should be 1 February 1974.

4. I should be grateful if the minuting by MED could be passed to Mr Rundle after action.

RECEIVED IN  
REGISTRY No. 63  
14 FEB 1974

RR 6/5.

13 February 1974

*J P Bannerman*  
J P Bannerman  
Middle East Section

*Issue.**Plan date 7 February**Tjmt*

*[Signature]*  
14/2

Director of Research  
LAST PAPER

*Mr [Signature] 14/2*  
*Registry will be able to*  
*discuss the distribution*



R.A. Regis

Please arrange reproduction and distribution.

*Rev. M. H. 2.*

RECEIVED IN REGISTRY 1974
2/28/74

1. I attach the final version of the final report of the Review for 1973. The Review was prepared by the Middle East Section and has been cleared with the last department. It is now ready for issue in the diplomatic report series.

2. I also attach last year's file on the 1973 Annual Review which shows the progress made as precedent.

3. The only point I wish to stress is that the Review should be dated before February 1974. I suggest that the date should be 1 February 1974.

4. I should be grateful if the minutes of the meeting could be passed to Mr. Bingle after action.

*[Signature]*  
J. P. Bannerman  
Middle East Section

13 February 1974

*[Handwritten notes and signatures]*  
Please see 7 February  
14/2



**CONFIDENTIAL**

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE**

**DIPLOMATIC REPORT No. 168/74**

RR 6/5

*General Distribution*

**IRAQ**

**7 February, 1974**

**IRAQ: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1973**

**SUMMARY**

Another unsettled year for Iraq, but the ending of the dispute with Iraq Petroleum (IPC) has greatly improved the economic outlook. (Paragraphs 1-2.)

2. More trouble on the Kuwait border in March; talks in August inconclusive. (Paragraph 3.)

3. An abortive *coup* from within the Ba'ath Party in June. Subsequent apparent strengthening of the President's powers, but Saddam Hussein's authority undiminished. Attempts by the régime to improve its image at home and abroad. Agreement by the Ba'ath and the Communists to form a National Front, but the Kurds remain disaffected. (Paragraphs 4-5.)

4. The Arab-Israel war. Iraq sends troops to the Syrian front; withdraws them after rejecting the ceasefire; boycotts the Algiers Summit. Remaining US and Netherlands oil interests nationalised, but no cutback in Iraq's oil exports. (Paragraphs 6-7.)

5. Although relations with the Soviet Union remain close, the IPC settlement has given Iraq more room for manoeuvre and the Soviet Union is not dictating her policies. (Paragraph 8.)

6. Relations with the UK have been helped by the settlement, which has increased commercial opportunities as well as opening the way for an accelerated increase in Iraqi oil production. Differences over Gulf policy remain, and indications that Iraq is considering a resumption of diplomatic relations have so far proved inconclusive. (Paragraph 9.)

7. Conclusions. A better than average year despite continued instability. Will Iraq grasp her new opportunities? (Paragraph 10.)

(Confidential)

Sir,

*Foreign and Commonwealth Office,*

*7 February, 1974.*

**Introduction**

For Iraq 1973 was another unsettled year, partly because of the effects of the Arab-Israel war but also because of internal instability and continued friction with her neighbours. The long-standing dispute with the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) which culminated in nationalisation in 1972 was settled in February, and this led to a rapid improvement in the economic climate. Hopes that Iraqi affairs generally might subsequently return to a more even keel were not fulfilled

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however. Internally, the régime's confidence was shaken by an attempted *coup* from within the Ba'ath Party's own ranks in June and the Kurdish situation remained tense. Externally, trouble flared up again over the Kuwait border in March and relations with Iran remained strained despite agreement to resume diplomatic relations in October. The Middle East war caused Iraq to switch her attention temporarily from the Gulf to the Syrian front, but any popularity she may have gained with Arab States by sending troops to fight there was dissipated by her opposition to the ceasefire and the subsequent peace moves, and by her refusal to attend the Arab Summit in Algiers. Despite indications in the second half of the year that the régime wished to conciliate opinion at home and abroad, it thus remains isolated to a large degree.

### **The IPC settlement**

2. The year began well with the ending of the oil dispute which had cast such a shadow over 1972. The terms of the settlement precluded any cash compensation to the companies but included the provision of 15 million tons of free oil (equivalent to about 70 per cent of what the IPC might have expected to get if their assets had been the subject of a participation agreement). In addition the IPC gained access to 10 million tons per annum of the 13 million tons being taken by the Compagnie Française des Pétroles at prenationalisation prices under a 10-year contract signed in January. The companies for their part undertook to pay £141 million to meet Iraq's accumulated claims against them, ceded their rights to the Mosul concession, and agreed to expand production by the Basrah Petroleum Company to 80 million tons per annum by 1976. This settlement greatly improved Iraq's financial outlook, and some major new development projects have since been announced. They include a pipeline from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean through Turkey; expansion of the existing pipeline through Syria; a deep water terminal in the Gulf; and a pipeline from the southern fields to the northern pipeline at Haditha, which would enable exports to be switched to the Gulf or the Mediterranean according to circumstances.

### **Kuwait border incident**

3. In March trouble flared up again on the Kuwait border when Iraqi troops took over the Kuwaiti police post at al Samita, which was already surrounded by Iraqi gun emplacements for the defence of Umm Qasr. A military build-up by both sides led to fears of a serious clash, but this was avoided and the Iraqis allowed Kuwait to reoccupy the site in May after destroying the post itself. An initiative by the Ba'ath led to talks being held in Baghdad in August. The Kuwaitis are reported to have offered a lease on the island of Warbah and a strip of Kuwaiti coastline in return for final demarcation of the frontier, but the Iraqis, who need Bubiyan as well as Warbah if they are to control the sea approaches to Umm Qasr, rejected the offer as inadequate and the Kuwaiti delegation returned empty-handed. It was announced that Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi Vice-President, would pay a return visit to Kuwait for further talks, but this meeting has not yet taken place.

### **The June plot**

4. Dissension within the Ba'ath Party came into the open in the summer with the attempted *coup* led by the Director-General for Security, Nadhim Kazzar. The plot, which involved waylaying President Bakr at the airport on his return from a trip abroad, failed partly because his aircraft was late arriving. Before they were caught the conspirators killed the Minister of Defence, General Shihab,



and wounded the Minister of Interior, General Ghaidan, who later came to London for treatment. More than 30 executions were subsequently carried out, although the death sentence on Abdul Khaleq al Sammarra'i, a leading member of the régime, was commuted to life imprisonment. The background to the plot is somewhat obscure, but it reflects continued rivalry between the civilian and military wings of the Ba'ath and the desire of some of the former to see Iraq adopting more radical policies, including more positive support for the Palestinian cause, a harder line against the Kurds and a more doctrinaire form of Socialism.

### **Constitutional changes**

#### *The National Front*

5. After the plot the régime introduced a number of amendments to the Constitution. These were announced with customary flourish, but apart from an apparent strengthening of the powers of the President (who also added the office of Minister of Defence to those of Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces which he already held) were not really significant. Although they could be interpreted as signalling a reduction in the influence of the party machine, the balance seems in fact to have altered little if at all and, despite much rumour to the contrary, there is no real evidence of a decline in the authority of Saddam Hussein. At the same time the régime made an attempt to improve its image at home and abroad. Saddam Hussein gave a news conference at which he discussed Iraq's foreign relations in unusually reasonable tones, and a new dialogue was held with the Kurds and the Communists on forming a National Front. This resulted in agreement with the Communist Party, which thereby gained formal recognition and some relaxation of the restrictions on its activities. But the levers of power remain with the Ba'ath, and they will be keeping a close watch on the Communists. The Kurds, despite promptings from Moscow, refused to join the front, and can be expected to resist joining it as long as the March 1970 agreement between them and the Ba'ath remains unimplemented. In the autumn the Ba'ath reverted to the tactic of undermining the position of Barzani's Kurdish Democratic Party by encouraging other Kurdish groups, including Communists. There were reports of skirmishes in the north and there must be a real danger of more widespread hostilities in March 1974, when the deadline for implementing the 1970 agreement is reached.

#### **The Middle East war**

6. When the Arab-Israel war broke out in October Iraq moved promptly to secure her eastern flank by inviting Iran to re-establish diplomatic relations, and after receiving a positive response sent at least two divisions to the Syrian front, where the one which saw most action was badly mauled. The Syrians, who must all along have regarded the presence of the Iraqi troops as a potential threat to their régime, were placed in an embarrassing position when Iraq rejected the UN call for a ceasefire, but after Syria had accepted it the troops were withdrawn. Iraq continued her opposition to Syrian and Egyptian policies by boycotting the Algiers Summit and ended the year as isolated as ever from the mainstream of Arab opinion, though her performance bought her increased credit with the Palestinians.

7. On oil too the Iraqis took an independent line. They nationalised US and Netherlands interests in the Basra Petroleum Company (and in December the 5 per cent share owned by the Portuguese—registered Partex) and called on other Arab oil producers to take similar action. They also called for a total embargo on exports to States which "insisted on supporting the Zionist enemy . . ."



But they refused to associate themselves with the OAPEC policy on global cuts, which they criticised publicly, on the grounds that friendly countries should not be hurt. Once war damage to the Baniyas terminal was repaired Iraq's oil exports were in fact resumed at the full rate, her main consideration being to maximise revenues after last year's losses.

### **Iraq-Soviet relations**

8. Relations with the Soviet Union remain close, but the settlement of the IPC dispute and the enhanced economic prospects resulting from it have given Iraq more room for manoeuvre between East and West. Iraq's support for subversion in Baluchistan and elsewhere in the Gulf area, the Kuwait crisis, and the delivery of more advanced Soviet arms during the year, caused anxiety among her neighbours about Soviet as well as Iraqi intentions, but the evidence does not suggest that the Soviet Union is deliberately inciting Iraq to adventurist policies. Iraqi facilities were used to help the Soviet airlift during the Middle East war, but proof (if it were needed) that the Soviet Union does not dictate Iraqi policies came when Iraq rejected the ceasefire and was openly critical of the Soviet attitude towards a settlement.

### **Relations with the UK and the West**

9. The IPC settlement was an important step towards normalising our relations with Iraq and it is encouraging to record amid the current energy crisis that Iraq is embarking on a major expansion of her oil industry. Although the role of the IPC partners in future development has yet to be clarified, the major part of Iraq's exports will no doubt continue to go to the West. Moreover, all the big new projects in the oil sector look like being carried out by Western (though not yet British) firms, and with the improvement of the financial situation commercial opportunities generally have improved; British exports to Iraq may have exceeded £30 million in 1973 and there should be scope for further expansion in 1974. In the political and diplomatic fields progress has been slower. The Iraqis probably meant it when they said in July that they would welcome better relations with the West, and it was encouraging that when they took action against US and Netherlands interests during the Middle East war they made it clear that they did not wish to harm European nations as a whole because of their even-handed attitude. But differences over Gulf policy remain and Iraq remains unwilling to make the first move towards a resumption of diplomatic relations with the UK.

### **Conclusions**

10. 1973 was a better than average year but it remains to be seen whether in 1974 the Ba'ath will make full use of their new opportunities or whether they will be distracted by fresh troubles in Kurdistan, the Gulf, or elsewhere in the Middle East.



## Enclosure

## Calendar of events in 1973

*January*

- 3 Technical and cultural agreements signed with Egypt.
- 6 Amnesty granted to overseas Assyrians involved in "events of 1933".
- 8 IBRD loan of US \$40 million announced to finance irrigation of lower Khalis area.
- 9-11 Foreign Minister visits Syria to settle oil pipeline royalties.
- 11 Iranian helicopter landed and detained near Mandali.
- 24 Foreign Minister visits Cairo for Arab Joint Defence Council meeting.  
Syrian Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture, Mohammed Haidar, visits Baghdad.

*February*

- 5 INOC signs long-term contract with CFP for oil supplies to 1982.
- 11 Czech Foreign Minister visits Baghdad.
- 13 Abba Eban speaks about 10 Jews detained in Iraq.
- 14 Pakistan finds arms in premises of Iraqi Embassy in Islamabad and withdraws her Ambassador from Baghdad.

*February*

- 17-22 Palestinian delegation led by Ahmed Jibrael, Secretary-General of PFLP, holds political talks with Ba'ath Party.
- 17-24 Vice-President Kang Ryang of Democratic People's Republic of Korea visits Baghdad.
- 26 Kuwait Foreign Minister, Sheikh Sabah Ahmed al Jaber, visits Baghdad.
- 28 Agreement signed between IPC Group and Iraq Government settling all outstanding claims, including nationalisation of IPC in Iraq and compensation for the expropriation of the North Rumaila field under Law 80.

*March*

- 1 IPC Agreement ratified by RCC and gazetted. Presidential speech and demonstrations in the streets during night of 28 February-1 March.
- 6 Loading facilities at Tripoli (Lebanon) opened to Iraqi oil again. First shipment leaves 9 March.
- 12 Minister of Interior carries a message to President Numeiry from President Bakr about the arrested Black September guerillas held in Khartoum. Returns 14 March via Beirut, where he sees Arafat.
- 13 Oil Minister calls on President Assad in Damascus.
- 15-18 Ahmed al Suwaidi, UAE Foreign Minister, visits Baghdad.
- 16 Mrs. Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet-Nam, visits Baghdad.
- 18 Dispute with Lebanon over ownership of Tripoli terminal. Iraq bans import of Lebanese goods.
- 20 Border incident with Kuwait. Iraqi troops take Kuwaiti police post at Al Samitah. Two Iraqis and two Kuwaitis killed.
- 21 Abdul Halim Khaddam, Foreign Minister of Syria, arrives to discuss Kuwait dispute and leaves for Kuwait the same day.
- 21-24 Saddam Hussein visits Moscow with Foreign Minister Abdul Baqi.
- 22-24 RCC lift ban on travel abroad for medical treatment and tourism. Authority delegated to provinces for issue of passports for all countries except US, UK and West Germany.
- 22-28 Dr. Murad Ghali, representing President Sadat, arrives in Baghdad to mediate on Kuwait border problem.  
Kamal Jumblatt, Chairman of Progressive Socialist Party in Lebanon, visits Iraq with Vice-Chairman Abbas Khalaf.
- 23 Mahmoud Riad, Secretary-General of the Arab League, visits Baghdad to mediate and flies on to Kuwait.
- 27-29 Yasir Arafat visits Baghdad for talks and goes to Kuwait.
- 28 Dr. Mohammed al Zayyat, Foreign Minister of Egypt, arrives in Baghdad on three-day official visit.



**CONFIDENTIAL****April**

- 1 Austerity measures of May 1972 lifted.  
Mosul Petroleum Company nationalised as per 28 February agreement.
- 2 Iraq withdraws from al Samitah police post on Kuwait border.
- 4-7 Yasir Arafat visits Baghdad again.
- 4-11 Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, C-in-C. Soviet Naval Forces, visits Iraq, including Umm Qasr port.
- 5 Plans for new deep water oil terminal at Khor al Khafka announced following studies by ERAP.
- 6-8 Foreign Minister flies to Kuwait to discuss the border.
- 7 Iraq grants US\$50 million loan to India in form of crude oil and India agrees to import 30 million tons crude oil over a 10-year period, 1977-87. Cultural and economic agreements also signed.
- 11-25 Minister of Interior visits Moscow.
- 12 Demonstration march in Baghdad against Israeli operations in Lebanon. Jewish family of five rumoured murdered in Baghdad.
- 18 Telex link Basrah-Kuwait opened.
- 19-20 Romanian Foreign Minister, Macovescu, visits Iraq.
- 25-30 Foreign Minister visits Switzerland privately for talks with Iranian team.
- 26 President Francois Tombalbaye of Chad visits Iraq.
- 30 Egypt's War Minister, Lieutenant-General Ahmed Ismail, visits Baghdad for a meeting with General Shihab.

**May**

- 7 Troops exercise in Basrah area. Practice air raid warnings.
- 11 RCC member Abdul Khaleq al Sammara'i returns from mediation visit to Lebanon.
- 13-17 Turkish Minister of Interior, Mukadder Oztekin, visits Iraq.
- 17 US\$40 million IBRD loan agreed for grain silos.
- 20 Price of wheat internally fixed at ID31.00 to ID44.00 per ton (*i.e.*, £40-£60), a dinar higher than last year, to encourage wheat growers.
- 22 Swaran Singh, Indian Foreign Minister, visits Iraq.
- 25 Iraq stops pumping oil for one hour on 25th anniversary of formation of the State of Israel.
- 31 Foreign Minister visits Czechoslovakia.

**June**

- 12 Iraq gives ID6.5 million loan to Syria to increase the capacity of the pipelines to Mediterranean ports.
- 13 Dr. Izzat Mustapha, RCC member and Minister of Health, goes on a two-week visit to Peking with six-man team to discuss matters of hygiene and medicine.  
Mr. Sarin Chak, Foreign Minister of National Union Front of Cambodia, visits Baghdad.
- 18 Flour prices reduced by Government decree. Ministry of Finance to subsidise State Grain Company.
- 24 President Bakr visits Bulgaria with strong economic team.
- 27 President Bakr visits Poland.
- 30 President Bakr returns from Poland. A plot brewing for his return is foiled but General Shihab is assassinated and Minister of Interior Sa'adoun Ghaidan wounded.

**July**

- 9 A total of 36 tried and executed in two batches, including Nadhim Kazzar, Director-General of Security, and Mohammed Fadhil of the Public Relations Bureau. Khaleq al Sammara'i (RCC member) has his death sentence commuted to life imprisonment by President Bakr.
- 14 Constitution amended. Apparent strengthening of powers of President.
- 18 Saddam Hussein gives conciliatory Press conference to Western correspondents.  
Ba'ath Party and Communists agree to form a National Front but Kurdish Democratic Party does not take part. Law promulgated to create a National Assembly.

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- August*
- 10 Iraqi airliner forced to land in Israel but later released.
  - 20-24 Sheikh Jabir al Ahmed al Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kuwait, visits Iraq for talks.
  - 27 National Action Charter published.
  - 31 Foreign Minister attends Non-Aligned Conference in Nigeria.
- September*
- 1 National Front issue invitation to KDP to meet them.
  - 8 Ministry of Interior offer ID10,000 for information leading to the arrest of those responsible for several unexplained murders in Baghdad.
  - 20 Foreign Minister attends 28th session of UN General Assembly.
  - 24 Secretariat of National Front announced.
  - 28 24-hour curfew imposed in Baghdad, and house to house searches carried out.
- October*
- 1 Baghdad Fair opened by Hikmat al Azzawi, Minister of Economy.
  - 6 War in Sinai and Golan Heights. Iraqi planes operate from Egypt.
  - 7 Iraq nationalises US shareholding in BPC: Law 70 of 1973.
  - 9 Iraq declares her willingness to re-open diplomatic relations with Iran.
  - 9 Iraqi troops and planes enter the battle in Syria.
  - 19 Series of public meetings on Kurdish autonomy addressed by Saddam Hussein.
  - 22 Dutch Shell portion of BPC nationalised: Law 90 of 1973.
  - 22 Iraq announces she it not party to Middle East ceasefire.
- November*
- 2 RCC give US\$6.8 million to Ba'ath Party Office for Palestine armed struggle.
  - 4-5 President Boumedienne of Algeria visits Iraq.
  - 4-8 Palestinaian leaders, Naim Hawatma and Yasir Arafat, visit Baghdad for talks with Ba'ath Party.
  - 5 Oil Minister attends meetings of Arab Oil Ministers in Kuwait.
  - 9 Ba'ath Party rejects Security Council resolutions on Middle East.
  - 9-11 Military parades as troops return from Syrian Front.
  - 10-14 Shell-NEDC team visit Baghdad for talks on compensation for nationalisation.
  - 12 Mohammed Saleh Muti'i, Foreign Minister of PDRY, visits Baghdad.
  - 21 Visit of Prime Minister of Lebanon, Takkei al Din al Sulh.
  - 21 Iraq-Soviet technical co-operation agreement signed.
  - 23 Nov.-2 Dec. Japanese delegation led by Professor Kanu of the Diet have talks in Baghdad; oil is one subject.
  - 27-30 Boris Ponamarev, Candidate Member of Soviet Politburo, visits Iraq. Co-operation agreement between Ba'ath Party and CPSU signed.
- December*
- 1-10 Arab Civil Aviation Conference in Baghdad.
  - 3-6 Pakistan Minister of Fuel and Energy visits Baghdad.
  - 9-12 Foreign Minister visits Yugoslavia.
  - 10 Yasir Arafat visits Baghdad.
  - 10 Tanzanian Minister of Trade and Industry visits Baghdad.
  - 13 State of Emergency lifted (imposed 18 October).
  - 18 M. Charbonnel, French Minister of Industry and Scientific Development, visits Iraq for talks on industry and oil.
  - 20 Saddam Hussein makes definitive speech on oil policy, denouncing higher prices and production cuts as harmful to Arab cause and advocating nationalisation of oil companies.
  - 20 Portuguese Gulbenkian Foundation share of Basrah Petroleum Company nationalised.
  - 27 Japanese Deputy Premier, Takeo Miki, visits Baghdad.



Commonwealth Coordination Dept. ✓ action taken  
JW 19 Feb.

Please see form CR 20 (enclosed).  
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J. W. Murphy  
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